



# 2009 Report to Citizens

State of Washington

Issued September 2010

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Want to know the impact of the Recovery Act on your community?

[Recovery.wa.gov](http://Recovery.wa.gov)

Did you know?  
Forbes magazine ranked Washington one of the top states in the nation for "Best States for Business."

*The best states ranking measures six vital categories for business: costs, labor supply, regulatory environment, current economic climate, growth prospects and quality of life.*

## Quick Facts:

Washington is the most trade-dependent state in the nation.

Return on Investment:  
For every \$1 spent on export assistance for agricultural products, the state received \$2.57.

## Message from the Governor

2009 was a year of challenges. Washington's economy was stronger than many other states across the country, yet continually declining revenues forced state government to take a hard look at what is most important to our citizens, and make some tough decisions.

We tightened our belts by implementing hiring freezes, travel restrictions, and agency budget reductions.

2009 was also a year of innovation, integrity, and hope. State agencies and lawmakers worked together to develop

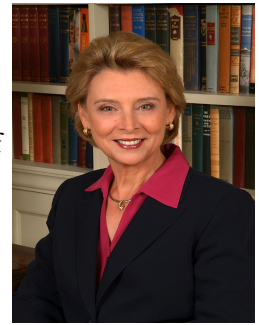
and implement several reforms to strengthen Washington's economy, create jobs, improve our education system, and maintain vital services to those in need.

State employees, many of whom face the same issues of economic insecurity and declining home values as thousands of other Washington residents, continued to provide essential services with dedication and compassion.

This report highlights some of these accomplishments and illustrates a remarkable commitment to our mission – to

serve the citizens of this great state.

Although our state is still recovering, I am confident that together we can weather this national economic crisis and emerge a stronger, better Washington.



*Chris*

Governor Chris Gregoire

## Economic Vitality and Security

- Increasing export sales. The state departments of agriculture and commerce help hundreds of companies begin exporting to international markets, expand their presence in new markets or with new products, or increase their current sales volume. Businesses assisted by these departments reported **nearly \$100 million in export sales** in fiscal year 2009.
  - Agriculture exceeded its target by \$12.7 million. Growing exports to Asia included **apples, cherries, onions, buckwheat, and seafood.**
  - After three quarters below target, Commerce had a very strong fourth quarter with \$20.5 million in exports.
- Retaining businesses. The state department of commerce helped recruit, retain, or expand **366 businesses and 8,560 jobs** in fiscal year 2009. As a result, over \$1.1 billion in private investment was leveraged.
- Helping keep the doors open. The state's Shared Work program allows **small businesses** to cut back on their payroll while continuing to employ workers. **Over 20,000 employees** received benefits from the Shared Work program in 2009.
- Funding construction work. The state department of transportation **certified over 200 transportation projects** as "shovel ready" to receive federal Recovery Act funding. Workers **completed 88 of these state and local projects** in 2009. Transportation employees on these projects **worked over 1 million hours** and received an **average wage of \$37 per hour.**
- Improving traffic safety. Federal Recovery Act dollars funded projects that provided drivers with safer, smooth driving surfaces, roadways that will last longer, and new safety amenities such as pedestrian walkways, **rumble strips** and **cable median barriers.**
- Helping make ends meet. The federal Recovery Act and the state both provided a temporary **increase in unemployment benefits** to people who were laid off and unable to find work. Over 400,000 Washingtonians received part of these benefits in 2009, totaling over \$450 million additional dollars supporting families and invigorating the economy.

# Highlights of Results in Priority Areas

## Community & Technical College Student Quick Facts

Median student age  
**26**

Students working full- or part-time  
**More than 50 percent**

Students who are also parents  
**About one third**

Students attending college part-time  
**More than 50 percent**

Youth from the Washington Youth Academy volunteered 500 hours at Belfair and Twanoh state parks, resulting in **record-time cleanup**.

### Did you know?

Every \$1 of food assistance generates \$1.80 of economic activity in local communities.

DSHS received national recognition for improving service to clients.



## High-Quality Education

- Improving college student achievement. Thanks to an innovative new program that rewards colleges for student progress — and not just enrollment — more students in **state community and technical colleges** are completing key milestones such as getting ready for college, succeeding in their first year, completing college math, and reaching the “tipping point” for better economic outcomes, which is a certificate with at least a year of college or a degree.

Every community and technical college improved student achievement, and the overall system improved in every category. Compared to the baseline year of 2006-2007, **students completing key academic benchmarks increased 19 percent in 2008-2009**, compared to only a 4 percent increase in enrollment.

### Key Benchmarks Met by Community and Technical College Students

	Number of Students	Basic Skills	College Ready	1st 15 College Credits	1st 30 College Credits	College Math Completed	Tipping Point	Total
<b>2006-2007</b>	467,809	70,950	61,581	60,422	45,385	33,989	22,932	<b>295,259</b>
<b>2008-2009</b>	486,927	94,796	73,652	70,127	52,300	36,000	25,544	<b>352,419</b>
<b>% Change</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>19%</b>

- Helping high school students graduate. The Washington Youth Academy, a volunteer program for high school dropouts or youth at risk of dropping out, began in January 2009. Part of the National Guard Youth Challenge Program, the academy provides a rigorous academic and social intervention program. **Over 200 students have graduated, exceeding the program's goals.** The first graduating class increased an average of two grade levels in math, science, and language arts. The second class showed the same level of improvement in math and reading.

*For a state report card on K-12, please visit the State Superintendent's website at [www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us).*

## Life-Long Health

- Ensuring safe drinking water. Twenty-one communities in 17 counties are receiving Recovery Act funding to **improve their drinking water**. Projects will remove harmful contaminants, replace failing pipes and other infrastructure, treat at-risk surface water sources, and improve overall water quality.
- Reducing consumer health care costs. Nearly 125,000 people have enrolled in the state prescription drug program. The program includes a discount card for residents who lack prescription insurance or are underinsured for prescription coverage. The card lowers the cost of prescriptions by allowing consumers to purchase at the same volume discount as the state. In 2009 alone, **consumer savings totaled almost \$4 million**.

## A Safety Net for the Most Vulnerable

- Increasing access to services. Faced with increasing caseloads and fewer staff, the department of social and health services implemented changes in the Basic Food program that resulted in a **75 percent reduction in application processing times**. Interview **wait times were reduced by over 99 percent**, from 3-4 weeks to 5-30 minutes, earning the program national recognition.
- Providing food to needy families. Recovery Act funding allowed the state to provide additional food assistance to families affected by current economic conditions.
  - **Over 430,000 families received an extra \$37 per month in food benefits.**
  - The state is overseeing distribution of nearly \$2 million for the purchase of protein-rich foods such as cheese, ham, turkey, and eggs. This emergency food assistance is helping meet a 19 percent spike in demand.

# Highlights of Results in Priority Areas

## Stewardship of Our Environment

- **Conserving energy and cutting costs.** Energy costs have decreased seven percent at prisons and correction centers since 2003. Coyote Ridge Corrections Center became the **first prison in the world** to attain LEED gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council for its entire campus. The facility's water usage decreased by 5.5 million gallons and reduced its energy costs by an estimated \$370,000 each year.
- **Cleaning up Puget Sound.** Lost and abandoned fishing nets have ensnared and killed thousands of marine mammals, birds, fish, and invertebrates in Puget Sound. The nets also threaten habitat, the economic viability of fisheries and human safety. At the end of 2009, divers had removed over 470 nets and restored 60 acres of habitat. A 2009 Recovery Act grant enabled the Northwest Straits Initiative to stay on track to remove 3,000 nets by December 2010.
- **Keeping toxic metals out of the environment.** Washington state was one of the first in the nation to collect unwanted TVs, computers and monitors for free recycling. Since the program began January 1, 2009, E-Cycle Washington has safely recycled over 22 million pounds of televisions, 12 million pounds of monitors, and nearly 4 million pounds of computers. Recycling electronics keeps toxic metals such as lead and mercury out of landfills and the environment.



Offenders gardening at Stafford Creek Corrections Center.  
Photo by B. Drummond.

No other criminal justice agency in the nation has more LEED-certified buildings than the Washington State Department of Corrections.

Number of buildings certified silver or gold by LEED  
**34**

### Did you know?

Green River Valley is home to the 2nd largest business park on the West Coast and over 100,000 jobs.

The State Toxicology Lab received international accreditation for the breath alcohol testing program — making it **only the fourth lab in the world** to receive such recognition.

**Public Communication Awards for WSDOT**

Francis B. Francois Award for Innovation

Best Use of Social Media

## Community Safety

- **Preparing for flooding.** After structural threats were discovered in the **Howard Hanson Dam in Green River Valley**, the state quickly responded. Coordinated efforts by over 20 entities, from the public and private sectors, identified shelter options and long-term housing plans for people and animals; developed detailed alert and warning protocols; trained staff to assist with disasters requiring evacuation; and resulted in evacuation plans, routes, signage and a Business Recovery Guide to aid in returning to normalcy after a disaster.
- **Preventing traffic deaths.** The number of fatalities on all roads in Washington State decreased for the fourth year in a row, dropping from 521 in 2008 to 491 in 2009. This decrease occurred despite a 1.8 percent increase in the number of miles traveled by vehicles in 2009. Washington's **traffic fatality rate decreased to .087 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, the lowest ever in our state**. The reduction is due in part to road safety improvements and increased enforcement against speeding and impaired driving.
- **Increasing drug enforcement.** Recovery Act funding saved one-third of the 29 narcotics taskforces that would have been disbanded without new funding. These taskforces **disrupted over 65 drug trafficking operations** in the last two quarters of 2009 alone.

## Ease of Mobility

- **Reducing commute times.** Eight of 18 major Puget Sound commute routes improved in the second half of 2009. After the state completed a series of congestion relief projects in 2009, **commuters on I-405 experienced significant improvements in travel times**. For example, drivers traveling northbound from Tukwila to Bellevue during peak periods for the morning commute spent 13 fewer minutes — or 36 percent less time in their vehicles.
- **Helping motorists.** State incident response units, which operate during peak traffic periods, safely and quickly clear traffic incidents on state highways. They also offer motorists free assistance such as providing fuel and jump starts, changing flat tires, and moving blocking vehicles off the roadway. The units **cleared 43,786 traffic incidents** in 2009 with an average clearance time of 13.4 minutes.
- **Keeping travelers up-to-date.** The state transportation department won accolades for **using social media tools to communicate with the public**. The agency uses a variety of social networking sites to not only hear from the public, but also to **provide real-time information** to the community. By using free social media tools, the agency has saved dollars that would have been spent on printing and advertising in newspapers and on radio stations.



## Thank you!

Budget reductions in 2009 threatened to close about 40 state parks. [Your donations](#) on vehicle license renewals helped keep state parks open.

## Did you know?

The State of Washington has achieved the highest standards in financial reporting [23 years in a row](#).



## Want to find out more?

### Agency performance:

[www.accountability.wa.gov](http://www.accountability.wa.gov)

[www.ofm.wa.gov/performance/default.asp](http://www.ofm.wa.gov/performance/default.asp)

### Building the state budget:

[www.ofm.wa.gov/budget/pog/](http://www.ofm.wa.gov/budget/pog/)

### State agencies:

[www.access.wa.gov](http://www.access.wa.gov)

### Questions or comments about this report? Contact:

Office of the Governor  
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(360) 902-0849

## Highlights of Results in Priority Areas

### Effective Administration of State Government

- **Improving services and saving money through better technology.** State agencies saved money and resources by providing more online services for citizens and businesses:
  - Drivers now have several “[skip a trip](#)” self-service options for renewing their licenses. In 2009, 23 percent of drivers renewed their licenses through the Internet. With the addition of a mail-in option in August 2009, [nearly 40 percent of drivers skipped a trip](#) by renewing their license either by mail or online.
  - Legislation passed in 2009 mandated electronic filing of monthly excise tax returns for businesses. In addition to giving businesses the ability to file 24/7, e-filing is estimated to [save \\$1 million in administrative costs per year](#) at the revenue department.
  - Even with an average 71 percent increase in unemployment claimants, the employment services department [saved over \\$3 million in postage costs](#) by streamlining their processes.
  - The state health care authority [saved nearly \\$1 million in printing costs](#) through a concerted effort to encourage health care plan enrollees to use online versions of benefit booklets and other information instead of paper copies.
  - Certified public accountants can now renew their licenses online. Ninety-three percent of renewals were done online in the first year, [saving an estimated \\$11.50 for every renewal](#) formerly done by paper.
  - By sharing technology services and using new computing, the state office of administrative hearings successfully [met 28 percent staff growth with no additional IT support](#).
- **Increasing fuel efficiency.** Over 50 percent, or 894 cars, in the motor pool fleet run by the department of general administration are hybrids. Hybrid vehicles reduce emissions and result in cost savings. Since 2004, **fuel efficiency has improved 18 percent** for the fleet, and current [motor pool rates are the lowest in the western states](#).

### What's Next?

The Washington Economic and Revenue Forecast Council reports that state revenues will further decline in 2010.

In order to mitigate the impact on Washington residents, state government will continue to look at what we do and prioritize those programs that bring the most important services to our customers.

Some of the key focus areas for the coming year include:

- Speeding up our state's economic recovery by continuing our focus on jobs, creating opportunities for businesses, and increasing our exports.
- Improving public education for students of all ages.
- Increasing the quality and availability of health care for Washington residents.
- Protecting and restoring the Puget Sound.



Hood Canal  
Photo by Amber Gillum

All of us, as citizens, as taxpayers, and as members of our collective community, have a role in making Washington stronger. As we move further into 2010, agencies and lawmakers will be asking for your ideas on how to improve the way government operates in this state.

We strongly encourage you to participate and share with us your ideas and innovations on how we can preserve and enhance the quality of life for all who call Washington home.

An online version of this report is available at [www.accountability.wa.gov/main/report.asp](http://www.accountability.wa.gov/main/report.asp).